

MINUTES

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 57th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

Call to Order: By **CHAIRMAN ROGER SOMERVILLE**, on February 1, 2001
at 12:00 P.M., in Room 260 Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Rep. Roger Somerville, Chairman (R)
Rep. Larry Jent, Vice Chairman (D)
Rep. Tom Dell (D)
Rep. Bob Lawson (R)

Members Excused: None.

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Dave Bohyer, Legislative Branch
Donna Huffman, Committee Secretary

Please Note: These are summary minutes. Testimony and
discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

Committee Business Summary:

Discussion:

Chairman Somerville said **Rep. Michelle Lee** was presenting a bill on the SARA Program in House Taxation Committee. **Ms. Lee** said she needed funding for this bill to do a study. Three members of the committee gave her \$250.00. **Ms. Lee** approached **Chairman Somerville** and asked if accepting this money was an ethics violation. **Chairman Somerville** said, according to the rules, any contribution or gift over \$50.00 is to be turned down. One check was written out to SARA Program, the other check was blank, and \$20.00 in cash.

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Rep. Dell said if she deposits the money in the study fund and does not personally benefit from that money, there would be no unethical attempt or breaking of the rules. He said **Ms. Lee**

needs to get receipts after depositing the money in the study fund.

Rep. Jent said it does not seem to him there is ethical violation or personal benefit by the member and no intent to influence the legislation on behalf of the giver. He thinks Ms. Lee should give the money back to the individual members that gave it to her and document it.

The House Ethics Committee was in agreement that **Ms. Lee** return the money to each of the individuals that gave it to her and request a receipt. Also they recommended that she provide the individual members with addressed envelopes so they may make their respective contributions directly to the nonprofit entity.

A letter regarding this decision from the House Ethics Committee was given to Rep. Michelle Lee. **EXHIBIT(eth26a01)**.

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Dave Bohyer briefed committee on House Ethics Rules and Procedures. **EXHIBIT(eth26a02)**.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 1:00 P.M.

REP. ROGER SOMERVILLE, Chairman

DONNA HUFFMAN, Secretary

RS/DH

EXHIBIT (eth26aad)